

T-693

c. 1860, 1886

John R. Kirby House
St. Michaels
Private

Built during the second half of the nineteenth century in at least two stages, the oldest part of this house probably dates from the ownership of Isabel Keithley, who purchased this property initially in 1859. With the transfer price at \$130 it seems probable that the lot was not improved by a substantial dwelling. Nine years later, Isabel, who had married Josiah Thomas, transferred title to the property to Duncan DeBeet for \$500, who then sold the house back to the Thomases two years later. This short-term transfer may have been due to a temporary loan that was satisfied in two years. Finally in 1886, James Benson, the executor of the estate of Josiah Thomas, sold the Mulberry Street house to Amelia A. Kirby. During the same year, a short notice appeared in The Eastern Star on November 2 stating that

Work has been begun by Mr. John R. Kirby on his recent purchase on Mulberry street. The shed kitchen has been removed and the house moved ten feet west giving good space for a new addition on the east side to be shortly erected.

The property was not sold out of the Kirby family until 1925.

The John R. Kirby house is a large two-story frame dwelling built during the prosperous period in St. Michaels that surrounded the Civil War. The ell-shaped main house carries notable features including a turned post porch, a sidelighted main entrance, and two-over-two sash windows. The house stands on the south side of Mulberry Street in a row of contemporary dwellings.

Maryland Historical Trust
State Historic Sites Inventory Form MAR 28 1990

RECEIVED

Survey No. T-693

Magi No.

DOE ☐ yes ☐ no

**MARYLAND HISTORICAL
TRUST**

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic

JOHN
~~ANDREW~~

R. KIRBY HOUSE

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 204 Mulberry Street ☐ not for publication

city, town St. Michaels ☐ vicinity of congressional district First

state Maryland county Talbot

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Mr. and Mrs. Fred M. Mowbray

street & number 204 Mulberry Street telephone no.:

city, town St. Michaels state and zip code MD 21663

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Talbot County Clerk of Court liber 399

street & number Talbot County Courthouse folio 265

city, town Easton state Md 21601

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date ☐ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☐ local

pository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Survey No. T-693

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date of move _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The John R. Kirby house is located at 204 Mulberry Street in the center of St. Michaels, Talbot County, Maryland. The two-story ell-shaped frame dwelling faces north with the principal gable oriented on an east/west axis.

Built around 1870, the two-story, ell-shaped frame dwelling is supported by a low brick foundation, and it is sheathed with a combination of German and aluminum siding. A layer of asphalt shingles covers the steeply pitched gable roof. An article in The Easton Star, printed on November 3, 1886, states that improvements were being made to the house which involved moving the existing house west ten feet in order to provide space for an east end addition.

The north (main) elevation is an asymmetrical five-bay elevation with a center entrance and flanking two-over-two sash windows. The windows retain their louvered shutters. The front door is framed by three-light sidelights and a four-light transom. Stretching across the center three bays is a turned post, hip roofed front porch with square handrails between the posts. The porch roof is covered with an old layer of seamed tin. Lighting the second floor are five unevenly spaced two-over-two sash windows, also hung with their louvered shutters. A round arched two-over-two sash window pierces the upper gable front. The base of the roof is trimmed with a boxed cornice and slightly extended eaves.

Narrow brick stove chimneys rise through the center of the ell and the east gable end.

The interior was not seen.

8. Significance

Survey No. T-693

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates

Builder/Architect

check: Applicable Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D
and/or

Applicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Level of Significance: ☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

The John R. Kirby house is a large two-story frame dwelling built during the prosperous post-bellum period in St. Michaels' history. The ell-shaped main house carries period details including a turned post porch, a sidelighted main entrance, and two-over-two sash windows. The house stands on the south side of Mulberry Street in a row of contemporary dwellings.

HISTORY AND SUPPORT

Built during the third quarter of the nineteenth century in at least two sections, the oldest part of the house probably dates from the ownership of Isabel Keithley, who purchased this property initially in 1859. (68/456) With the transfer price at \$130 it seems probable that the lot was not improved by a substantial dwelling. Nine years later, Isabel, who had married Josiah Thomas, transferred title to the property to Duncan DeBeet for \$500, who then sold the house back to the Thomases two years later. (76/493) This short-term transfer may have been due to a temporary loan that was satisfied in two years. This same temporary transfer was executed again two years later. (78/43) Finally in 1886, James Benson, the executor of the estate of Josiah Thomas, sold the Mulberry Street house to Amelia A. Kirby. During the same year, a short article appeared in The Easton Star on November 2 stating that

Work has been begun by Mr. John R. Kirby on his recent purchase on Mulberry street. The shed kitchen has been removed and the house moved ten feet west giving good space for a new addition on the east side to be shortly erected.

The property was not sold out of the Kirby family until 1925. (202/381)

YEAR: 1965 VOL: 399 PAGE: 265 PRICE:

FROM: Doris M. Worm

TO: Fred M. Mowbray and Lillian G. Mowbray

NOTES: Begins at a post at the NE corner of Sidney R. Orem; runs south 120 feet to land of the Board of Education (St. Mary's Square); then east 50 feet to the late John T. Harrison; then north 120 feet to Mulberry Street; with Mulberry St. 50 feet to the beginning.

Conveyed to Worm by Marion H. Gillis in a title clearance 1965, 399/265.

Went to Marion H. Gillis, Jr., Lee S. Gillis, and Lillian G. Mowbray on death of Marion H. Gillis.

Conveyed to Marion H. Gillis by Amelia Kirby, et al 1925, 202/381.

YEAR: 1925 VOL: 202 PAGE: 381 PRICE:

FROM: Amelia A. Kirby and others

TO: Marion H. Gillis

NOTES: Same description.

Conveyed to Amelia A. Kirby by James Benson, executor of estate of Josiah Thomas 1886, 105/1104.

A life estate to Amelia Kirby 1920, 185/474.

YEAR: 1886 VOL: 105 PAGE: 104 PRICE: \$400

FROM: James Benson, executor for the estate of Josiah Thomas

TO: Amelia A. Kirby

NOTES: Same description.

Conveyed to Josiah Thomas by N. C. Killam 1874, 80/359.

1874, 105/105 is a mortgage to Thomas Blades of E for \$940 from Amelia A. Kirby and John R. Kirby.

From THE EASTON STAR, November 2, 1886: "Work has been begun by Mr. John R. Kirby on his recent purchase on Mulberry street. The shed kitchen has been removed and the house moved ten feet west giving good space for a new addition on the east side to be shortly erected."

YEAR: 1874 VOL: 80 PAGE: 359 PRICE:

FROM: Nelson C. Killam (Baltimore City)

TO: Josiah Thomas

NOTES: Same lot, different neighbors.

Conveyed to Killam by Josiah Thomas 1872, 78/43.

YEAR: 1872 VOL: 78 PAGE: 43 PRICE: \$500
FROM: Josiah Thomas and Isabella K. Thomas
TO: Nelson C. Killam
NOTES: Lot is between Josiah Fairbank and Lewis Comegys. 50 x 120.
Conveyed to Isabella Thomas by DeBeet 1870, 76/492.

YEAR: 1870 VOL: 76 PAGE: 492 PRICE:
FROM: Duncan DeBeet
TO: Isabella Thomas
NOTES: This deed was not copied. The purpose of the yo-yo between Thomas and DeBeet is not clear.
Conveyed to DeBeet by Thomas 1868, 74/269.

YEAR: 1868 VOL: 74 PAGE: 269 PRICE: \$500
FROM: Josiah Thomas and Isabel Thomas
TO: Duncan DeBeet
NOTES: Same description.
Conveyed to Isabel Keithley by James Harrison, Jr. 1859, 68/456.
Do not have facts, but at this time am assuming Isabel Thomas and Isabel Keithly is same person!

YEAR: 1859 VOL: 68 PAGE: 456 PRICE: \$130
FROM: James Harrison, Jr. and Susan V. Harrison
TO: Isabel Keithley
NOTES: The lot is 50 x 120

YEAR: 1858 VOL: 68 PAGE: 298 PRICE: \$130
FROM: Thomas W. Blades
TO: James Harrison of J
NOTES: Referred-to as Lot number 15, 50 x 120.

YEAR: 1858 VOL: 68 PAGE: 83 PRICE: \$150
FROM: James Parrott and Margaret A. Parrott
TO: Thomas W. Blades
NOTES: Lot number 15. 60 x 120.

No record of the purchase of this lot by James Parrott has been found.
In 1877, 84/357 (T-634) this lot is referred-to as the "Mary Grace Lot".
Mary Grace was the wife of Richard Grace who purchased the lot in 1798.

At this time there is a break of 60 years in the chain! During this time there were apparently more than one "James Parrott" buying and selling property in Talbot. Examination of some 50 deeds failed to find one concerning this lot.

YEAR: 1798 VOL: 28 PAGE: 56 PRICE: p75 spec
FROM: John Camper
TO: Richard Grace, Ditcher (FN)
NOTES: Lot number 15.

YEAR: 1793 VOL: 25 PAGE: 212 PRICE: p60 cm
FROM: Levin Mansfield, Tailor
TO: John Camper
NOTES: Lot number 15. Begin at the NE corner of number 16 on Mulberry Street; run N 66 15' E 62 feet to the corner of lot number 50 "taking two feet from number 50 to add to number 15 on account of the chimney of said lot standing on a part of lot 50; then by and with lot 50 and 49 to the corner of lots 40 and 36; then with number 36, 50 feet to lot 16; with lot 16 160 feet to the beginning."

This does not make much sense - but that's the way it is!

YEAR: 1784 VOL: 21 PAGE: 446 PRICE: p100 sp
FROM: William Harrison, 3rd, of Joseph, Blacksmith
TO: Levin Manfield
NOTES: Lot number 15. This sale, made in specie, is one of the highest prices paid for a lot in St. Michaels.

YEAR: 1784 VOL: 21 PAGE: 449 PRICE: p20 sp
FROM: John Thompson
TO: William Harrison, Blacksmith
NOTES: Lot number 15.
This lot was the residue of James Braddock's legacy to Thompson. Thompson had sold "all" of Braddock's unsold property to James Wignal in May of 1784, but the sale of lot 15 to Harrison was made in June of that year. Perhaps the sale was honoring a previous agreement. At any rate, payment was made in specie -- a good price for a lot that was not waterfront and probably unimproved.

ST MICHAELS

ST. MICHAELS DIST. TALBOT CO.

1877 LAKE, GRIFFIN,
AND STEVENSON ATLAS

ST. MICHAEL'S BUSINESS REFERENCES,

DODSON, Dealer in Drugs, Medicines, Chemicals, Fine Toilet Soap, Fancy Hair and Tooth Brushes, Perfumery and Fancy Toilet Articles, Suspenders, Shoulder-Braces, Grass and Garden Seeds, Fine Wines and Liquors for Medicinal purposes, Oils, Varnishes and Dye Stuffs, Letter Paper, Pens, Ink, Envelopes, Glass, Putty, Carbon Oil, Nails, Chimneys, &c. Physicians' Prescriptions carefully Compounded.

HADDAWAY, Insurance Agent and Conveyancer.

W. DEAN, Collector of Claims, Real Estate Agent and Conveyancer.

IS DYOTT, Carpenter, Contractor and Builder, Shop at St. Michael's.

ED H. HAMBLETON, Carpenter and Builder, Shop at St. Michael's.

ES E. ON, Real Estate Agent and Collector of Claims.

SPARKS, Justice of the Peace and Collector.

SMITHMAN, Boot and Shoemaker. First class work done on short notice. Repairing promptly and neatly done.

ES. HAMBLETON, Proprietor of "Hamilton's Mechanical Shop." Blacksmithing, Wheelwrighting, and all work appertaining thereto. Industrial Machinery carefully repaired. Farming implements on hand, and made to order at short notice. Carriage Repairing, Trimming and Painting Specially.

WILLIAM CAULK, Physician and Surgeon.

JAMES SETH, Physician and Surgeon. Office and Residence near St. Michael's.

LIAM S. HARRISON, Blacksmith and Wagon Maker. Repairing promptly and neatly done. Shop in Broad Creek Neck.

NEAVITT & CO., Dealers in Dry Goods, Notions, Hats, Caps, Boots, Shoes, &c. Store in Broad Creek Neck.

N. T. HARRINGTON, Proprietor of "Williams House." Newly furnished and fitted. Table carefully catered for. All the luxuries of the season. Ample Stable Accommodations. Charges moderate.

NIEL J. KILMAN, Carriage Maker and Dealer in all kinds of Wagons.

GEORGE W. COLLINS, Tinner. Worker in Tin, Sheet Iron, &c. Also Dealer in Stoves and Tin, and Sheet Iron ware of every description.

E. BLADES, Carpenter, Contractor, and Builder. Persons having work in this line will do well to see him before contracting.

EPH HERGERSHEIMER, Ship Builder. Repairing of all kinds promptly and neatly done.

EVER FAIRBANK, Boot and Shoemaker. Is skillful in his profession. Those wanting first class work done will do well to patronize him.

RRISON & RICHARDSON, Carriage Makers. All work warranted. Repairing promptly and neatly done.

J. HOLLAND, Butcher and Dealer in Fresh Meats of all kinds. Shop on Talbot Street.

FT. C. R. LEONARD, Freighter of Grain of all kinds to any point.

OMAS BLADES, Of E. Dealer in Dry Goods, Notions, Cigars, Tobacco, &c.

EMIL HARRISON, Dealer in Groceries, Confectioneries, &c.

E. KILMON, Carriage Maker and Dealer in Carriages, Wagons, &c. Repairing promptly and neatly done.

A. DODSON Physician and Surgeon.



T-693, John R. Kirby House





T-693

John ~~THOMAS~~ KIRBY HOUSE

St. Michaels, Talbot Co., MD

North elevation

6/89, Paul Touart, photographer

Negative/MD Historical Trust